



RIDER INFORMATION HANDBOOK

September 2008

Riley County Area Transportation
Agency

About the Agency

Founded in 1976 by group of county residents concerned about the lack of public transportation, we are a private, non-profit corporation led by a 15 member volunteer Board of Directors. Daily operations are headed by a Director, who is assisted by a dispatcher and a group of carefully trained drivers.

Who Can Ride the Bus?

Service is available to the general public. We are committed to offering courteous, safe, and reliable service for all of our riders, without regard for race, gender, age, or disability.

Service Area

Service is available throughout the Manhattan and Riley county area.

Days and Times of Operation

The Area Transportation Agency (aTa Bus) service runs from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. The aTa Bus will observe these holidays on which no service will be available: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, The Forth of July, Labor Day, Veteran's Day Thanksgiving Day, plus the Friday of the same week, and Christmas Day.

Appendix 1

Riley County Area Transportation Agency, Inc. Rider Grievance Form

Date of Grievance:_____

Your Name:_____

Address:_____

Phone:_____

Please state the facts of this complaint and give the name and address of any witness (es) involved if applicable. You will receive a reply by mail within 10 working days.

Details of Grievance

(You may use the back of this form or additional pages if needed.)

Signature_____

Date: _____

Received by_____

Date: _____

Grievance Procedure

Passenger complaints will be referred to the Director as soon as possible. A complaint form (see Appendix 1) should be completed for passenger complaints and problems. The drivers carry additional complaint forms. The driver will call immediate concerns in to the Dispatcher for resolution. A customer who believes that he/she has suffered a grievance may also elect to discuss the matter with the Director in person, but should do so within five working days of the date of the grievance. The Director will respond to all grievances within five working days, making every effort to resolve the grievance at this level. If a resolution is not reached, the grievance must be described in writing and submitted to the President of the Board of Directors within an additional five working days. The President will review the evidence presented by the party bringing the grievance and the Director during a meeting of the parties within thirty working days and will provide a decision at that time. If the parties to the grievance are not satisfied with the President's decision, the President will refer the matter to the full Board of Directors. That Board shall consider the grievance at their next regular meeting, but in no case more than sixty days after the President's decision was rejected. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

How do I Get a Ride ?

Apart from a few scheduled routes we offer "demand-responsive" transportation. Appointments for rides are taken Monday thru Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m. We schedule vehicles and drivers today to meet the demand for rides tomorrow. To assure a ride, it is advisable to book your trip as far ahead as possible. All requests for rides **must** be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. We can schedule rides for you up to two weeks in advance. For next day rides the cutoff time for scheduling is 4:00 p.m. the day before. Further, riders should not attempt to schedule a ride by leaving ride requests on the answering machine.

For situations when you need a ride but you can't be sure of the time the ride will be needed, we will schedule you for a "will call" ride. You call the dispatcher when you are ready to be picked up. All Manhattan call-ins must be received by the office no later than 5:00 p.m.

Fares

Fares paid by our riders cover only a portion of actual cost of transportation. Fares are \$2.00 for all rides within the Manhattan city limits. Fares for rides outside these limits but inside Riley County will be \$4.00 for all rides. Ticket cards are available for purchase from the drivers and are available at the office. The cost is \$24.00. Ticket cards are non-refundable.

What if I Live Outside of Manhattan?

The aTa Bus serves all of Riley County. For riders who live five miles or more outside the city limits we offer a zone service. This means that transportation services are available to you on certain days of the week. To find out the days and pickup times for your area please call the dispatcher at (785) 537-6345 for further details.

The Ogden Route

Service to and from Ogden is available Monday thru Friday. Riders wishing to ride the bus need to call in to the Dispatcher and schedule a ride. The bus has the following schedule and fixed pick-up locations:

7:00 a.m.	The Ogden Community Center
7:05 a.m.	Casey's
11:00 a.m.	The Ogden Community Center
11:05 a.m.	Casey's
2:00 p.m.	The Ogden Community Center
2:05 p.m.	Casey's

Riders will be picked up at these locations and times and dropped off at their specific destinations. Riders wishing to return to Ogden can call up to 30 minutes prior to the next scheduled pick-up time in Ogden. The last call-ins of the day must be received by the office no later than 5:00 p.m.

Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance

Threats of violence, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against any employees or other individuals are prohibited. Riley county aTa has a "zero tolerance" policy for such conduct. It will not be tolerated and it is the duty of all employees to report such conduct.

Any person who threatens violence, displays threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts in aTa offices or in or around aTa vehicles will be removed from the area or vehicle as soon as safety allows. Said person shall be prohibited from entering aTa offices or riding or driving aTa vehicles until an investigation of the conduct in question has been completed.

Should the investigation establish a violation of this policy, aTa will take action up to and including termination of any business relationship, suspension or termination of employment, and civil or criminal prosecution.

No weapon, including firearms concealed or not, other instrument intended for use as a weapon, or any object capable of inflicting serious bodily injury upon another person or property may be carried in or on any vehicle of aTa Bus, even if a person has a permit to carry a concealed weapon, except for law enforcement personnel.

Conduct and Hygiene

Inappropriate conduct, including behaviors which present a danger to other riders will not be tolerated. These include but are not limited to: intoxication, fighting, arguing, threatening, the driver or fellow passengers, use of foul language and sexual harassment. Individuals who are habitually incontinent or have offensively poor personal hygiene will be denied bus services. At the driver's discretion, a rider who engages in persistently inappropriate and/or dangerous behavior can be required to vacate the vehicle. Drivers, with the approval of the Dispatcher, may put a rider off the bus or call the authorities if necessary. No tobacco or alcohol products of any kind may be consumed on the bus.

Bad Weather Policy

If the management of aTa Bus determines the weather is so severe it is unsafe to operate, then operations will cease for the day in question. Radio station KMAN-AM and the local TV stations will have weather related announcements regarding aTa Bus services during times of bad weather.

What if I am Disabled and Cannot Get to the Bus Stops

Door to door demand responsive service in Ogden is available for persons with mobility impairments. Persons eligible for this ADA service must complete an application. This service is a "safety net" for those persons who do not have the functional abilities to access and ride the Ogden route bus. Every certified individual for this ADA service is required to re-certify for continuing eligibility every three years upon becoming initially certified. Call the office at (785)537-6345 for further information about this service.

What if My Plans Change?

We will attempt to reschedule rides as needed. The earlier you call, the more likely it will be that we can meet your needs. You should cancel rides that you do not need at least one hour prior to scheduled pick-up window to avoid being charged for a "no show". Rides may be cancelled by notifying the Dispatcher or by leaving a message on the answering machine. You may not board the bus and ask the driver to change your booked destination.

Can Children Ride?

Children 10 and under can ride free. All children under the age of twelve must be accompanied by an adult.

Children under four years old must be in a child safety seat, while children 4-8 years old must be in a safety or booster seat unless they weigh more than 80 lbs or are taller than 4 ft 9 inches tall. The child must be secured with an appropriate child seat provided by the parent or guardian. The parent or guardian will properly fasten such devices using the vehicle seatbelts.

Pickup Times/Wait Policy

When scheduling a ride, the dispatcher will give the rider a pick-up window. This time is usually about fifteen to thirty minutes prior to the riders scheduled appointment time. The driver may arrive anytime during this pick-up window. Riders should be ready for pickup 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival window of the bus. Upon arrival, the driver will wait for FIVE minutes.

The driver will attempt to notify the rider that he/she is there. The driver will honk to alert the rider that the bus has arrived. If we cannot make contact with the rider we will assume that the rider is not taking the ride and you will be considered a no show for that ride. The rider has any additional rides scheduled for that day he/she must contact the Dispatcher if you intend to take those other rides, otherwise, those rides will be cancelled.

Delays

We are proud of our record of getting riders to their destinations on time. Our standard for scheduled ride pick-ups is to arrive no more than 15 minutes early and not more than 5 minutes late. If a driver is running behind and cannot meet this standard, the Dispatcher will contact the rider. For call-in rides our standard is to pick up the rider no more than 30 minutes after he/she has called into the office.

A late cancellation is considered a no-show.

Even when a trip is cancelled a day in advance or at least one hour before the established pick-up window, a pattern of excessive cancellations causes the aTa Bus not to be available at the time other customers desire service. The policy is as follows: Riders canceling 50% or more of their trips scheduled with a minimum of six (6) cancellations within a Ninety (90) Day period, may be subject to a 30-day suspension from service

Will You Carry Animals?

For policy purposes, animals are considered either service animals or pets.

Service animals will be transported with their owners without restriction or extra cost. However, the Dispatcher will require written verification that riders have a disability and that the service animal is necessary to give the person equal opportunity to use and enjoy the transportation service. Further, service animals must be supervised and the owner/handler must retain full control of the animal at all times. Owners/handlers are responsible for cleanup of any waste or litter caused by the service animal and are liable for any damages the animals cause.

Pets may be transported with their owners if the pets are secured in an enclosed container and if they can be fit into the schedule. Pets have the lowest priority for transportation. Pets requiring emergency veterinary assistance will not be transported. An ill service animal is treated as a pet in this respect: such animals are not performing their service function.

No Show and Cancellation Policy

The definition of a no-show is: A rider who has a scheduled trip and does not appear at the designated pick-up point and time, does not cancel the trip in advance or refuses to take the scheduled trip.

Fines: \$5.00 per no-show. Three or more unpaid no-shows and the rider will be suspended until the no-shows are paid for. Additionally, a rider with three no shows in a thirty day period will be suspended from service for thirty days.

A letter of warning will be sent after the second no show. A rider may appeal a suspension through the grievance procedure process. Rides will continue during the appeal process. A no-show or late cancellation that occurs as the result of circumstances beyond the control of the rider or due to inclement weather will not count.

Any rider who demonstrates a pattern or practice of no-shows will be suspended from service. "A pattern or practice involves intentional, repeated, or regular actions, not isolated, accidental, or singular incident." Rosemary G Mathias et al., "Practices in No-Show and Late Cancellation Policies for ADA Paratransit: A Synthesis of Transit Practice," TCRP Synthesis 60 6, (2005).

In order to provide the greatest service to all passengers, cancellation notice should be made no less than **one** hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Cancellations made less than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time will be considered a late cancellation. This policy applies to all scheduled trips including subscription trips.

What About Trips That I Need Regularly?

A subscription can be made for rides that are taken on a regular basis, at the same time by the same individual, to regularly scheduled appointments. The aTa Bus will allow subscription rides based on demand up to 50 percent of the available rides in a given hour. Subscriptions will be set up for riders taking two or more round trips per week. Subscriptions will be taken on a first come first serve basis.

It is the responsibility of riders with subscriptions to cancel any subscription ride that they do not intend to take. Individuals with subscription rides will be subject to the no show policy and late cancellation policy described below. In addition, three no shows in a 30 day period will result in the loss of subscription ride privileges. Upon request, the rider may again be scheduled for a subscription after a 4 - month suspension period.

Cancellations on the answering machine for rides before 7:30 a.m. daily must be made by 6:00 a.m., or they are considered no shows. Due to the way we schedule we do not allow on-board changes of ride destinations. You may not board the bus and ask the driver to change your booked destination.

Wheelchair Procedures

Drivers will assist customers on approved wheelchair ramps. Drivers are not required to assist passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs. Drivers will secure all wheelchairs with tie-downs and their passengers with lap and shoulder belts. Riders using scooter type vehicles may be asked to transfer to regular seating for their safety. However, passengers with scooters cannot be required to transfer, nor is aTa Bus required to transport scooters not meeting the size and weight limitations of a "standard wheelchair" as defined by ADA regulations. The maximum capacity of any one rider and or wheelchair on the bus lifts is 600 pounds. Riders using the lift will be asked to sign a waiver assuring that he/she and or his/her wheelchair can safely use the lift in compliance with the weight restriction

Personal Care Attendants

A personal care attendant (PCA) is defined as someone who provides assistance to a rider, and the rider must have in order to ride the bus. One attendant per rider will be permitted to ride the bus without charge. To prevent potential abuse, a companion (e.g.

friend or family member) does not count as a personal care attendant unless the rider regularly makes use of a PCA and the companion is actually acting in that capacity. We aTa reserves the right to require riders to use the service of a PCA.

Personal Assistance to Riders

Due to scheduling demands, drivers must limit their personal assistance to riders. Drivers assist riders with only those activities directly related to boarding or exiting the vehicle. Drivers may not enter a rider's home. Drivers shall not handle rider's keys, purses, garage door openers, or access any home security devices. Riders may bring grocery and personal items purchased at stores on the bus, but except for designated "grocery runs", are limited to what the rider can carry in one trip. Riders should not expect aTa Bus to transport furniture items, including televisions, gardening items such as potting soil, or any items of weight exceeding 15 pounds. Drivers will be responsible for passengers entering and exiting the bus safely.

Only drivers will operate the power lifts provided with vehicles. While operating the lift, drivers may not at the same time be riding the lift.

Drivers are not permitted to lift individuals required or wanting to transfer from a scooter or wheelchair to regular vehicle seating. Such riders must provide their own personal care attendant to assist in their transfer.

aTa reserves the right to refuse to transport any rider whose driveway, sidewalk, or any other access is icy, snowy, or in other condition that impedes the driver from safely boarding or alighting the rider. Seat belts must be worn at all times when riding the bus.

